

## **SABE Policy Statement on the R Word**

- Whereas the “r” word is used as a common insult
- Whereas when people with intellectual disabilities hear the “R” word it...
  - hurts the heart
  - feels like I can never do anything right
  - is not honor it is a put down
  - is like a sword, sharp to the point
  - makes us feel we are not people
  - is used to separate us from people without disabilities
- Whereas the “R” word is also used to put down people who are psychiatric survivors, it destroys the hopes and dreams of others
- Whereas when people have this label, it holds them back and
- sometimes society doesn’t let you do things
- Whereas there is widespread use of the word because people think it is funny and cool to use this word
- Whereas, if someone is told their entire life that they are no good because they have a disability, they may believe they do not deserve better treatment
- Whereas, sometimes a person feels shame and is afraid to speak up because they fear physical harm
- Whereas the “R” word is used a lot on YouTube, My Space and Facebook and this and other hateful language about people with disabilities needs to be addressed
- Whereas, when the “R” word is used by organizations such as VOR is wrong, disrespectful and offensive and must be stopped
- Whereas, children and adults with developmental disabilities are abused at much higher rates than others. The “R” word contributes to this pattern of violence. It makes it a common thing, acceptable to hurt people with disabilities
- Whereas, just because people need help, we are all human beings and all human beings need help at some point in their life
- Whereas, when we hear this word we hear:
  - we don’t want you,
  - you are different,
  - you do not belong,
  - you belong somewhere else

- Whereas, the usage of the “R” word has the same impact as the “N” Word, and any other type of hate slur
- Whereas, when someone thinks you have that label they won’t let you do what you are truly capable of
- Whereas, when they use those words they keep you from finding yourself

**Be it resolved, it is time for citizens and local, state and federal officials to:**

- Come out and put a stop to using the “R” word
- Recognize it is not just about being politically correct it is about respect
- Use People First language
- Make sure people continue to get their supports and/or services when the name is changed to intellectual disabilities
- Recognize that Congress passed a bill eliminating the word “R” word from federal statutes, so we should look to the future, using the term
- MR is old school.